

**A Testimony in Favor of Amending the Michigan Liquor Control Code
In order to Allow Community College Participation,
Presented in the House Committee on Regulatory Reform
June 15, 2011 – HOB 521
Presented by Dr. Daniel J. Phelan, President of Jackson Community College,
Jackson, MI**

Good morning, Chairman Crawford and members of the Committee, my name is Dan Phelan. I serve as President of Jackson Community College, an institution that serves over 11,000 credit students annually in the tri-county area of south central Michigan. I want to first thank you for working with the community colleges and Representative Darany to introduce HB 4744 which when adopted will allow universities and community colleges to incorporate the service of alcohol in its culinary and hospitality program as well as functions that further the community and academic mission of the College.

Jackson Community College is a quality and continuous improvement-based, data-informed organization that has been continually regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission since 1928. We are a \$49M enterprise, comprised of over 684 full- and part-time employees who are committed to the success of our students. In terms of econometric impact, an independent study revealed that JCC accounts for nearly \$200 million of all earnings in the south central Michigan economy; roughly 5,500 jobs. We also know that for every \$1 of revenue at the College, we generate another \$8.48 in local area income.

In regard to why JCC, as well as its students, and the Jackson community, will benefit from this legislation our Culinary Arts Program has received regional and national recognition. You may recall that JCC Culinary Arts students provided the heavy hors d'oeuvres during the recent Community College Day at the Capitol in May. An integral part of the Culinary Arts curriculum is using alcohol in cooking, pairing and tasting.

With regard to the community, our Performing Arts Program at the George E. Potter Center distinguishes Jackson Community College from any other community college in Michigan. We take pride in our ability to serve our community's need for arts and entertainment. We have events and activities at the College that help advance the mission of our institution, including events for the Chamber of Commerce, Jackson Symphony Orchestra, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other economic development events, for which we'd like to make adult beverages available.

While citizens of Jackson County affectionately refer to the Potter Center as the "community's living room," our campus is located six miles south of town in a remote, rural region of southern Jackson County. JCC is far enough away from the city that this does not allow time for patrons to leave during intermission and come back before the event resumes.

Additionally, our local vintners support JCC's effort of offering alcohol at performing arts events. Letters from Cherry Creek Cellars, Lone Oak Vineyard Estate and Sandhill Crane Vineyards clearly articulate the wineries' support of JCC's efforts to obtain a liquor license. The College is a provider of these Jackson County wines to our

patrons. Selling the local wines at college events will not only provide a local outlet for the wines, but more importantly, publicize the winery and wines to Jackson residents and the surrounding communities. JCC also intends to buy directly from local beer distributors and help them out by adding another customer to their route.

The College is not interested in selling alcohol for weddings, anniversaries or other celebratory events not related to our mission. These types of activities and related sales are best managed by private industry.

Currently, the frequency and number of individual licenses that the College has to apply for each year to serve students and the community is problematic and is a logistical inefficiency. Specifically, we cannot submit a liquor license application more than thirty days in advance and we have to have enough time for the license to come back from the State for approval. Then, we must make a trip to the Sheriff's Department for the law enforcement signature. Each license is \$25, plus \$50 for the required bond. And even though JCC hosts numerous shows, the current law allows for no more than twelve special one day liquor licenses to be granted to any one organization per calendar year. Regrettably, the current process inhibits our ability to serve our students and the community in support of our mission.

There is also a matter of fairness, which the current statute did not address, as it constantly pits one college against the other in their attempts to be granted a license. However, HB 4744 now removes the winner and loser connotation and provides the parameters for every college and university to get a license.

I'm asking the members of this Committee to advance this legislation, not only for those who already have the authorization, but also for those of us who seek approval.

For the Jackson community, passage of this legislation would generate immediate and beneficial economic activity with local vintners and beer distributors. Thank you for your consideration.